(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the system in place for storing agro products and whether Government finds any fault in this system; and

(d) the steps Government is going to take, at the earliest, for making sufficient arrangement to store agro products so that these products do not get wasted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An Expert Committee was constituted by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation during 1998 to review the cold storages facilities in the country and assess the requirement of additional capacity etc. with a view to minimize the post harvest losses. The estimated loss of food grains ranges from 8% to 10% and for fruits and vegetables; the loss is estimated between 25% to 30% due to the lack of adequate infrastructure including cold storages.

(c) and (d) (i) A scheme on 'Capital Investment Subsidy for Construction/ Modernization/ Expansion of Cold Storage and Storage for Horticulture Produce' has been launched in 1999 for implementation through National Horticulture Board (NHB). Under this Scheme, credit-linked back-ended subsidy is provided @ 33.33% of the project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs. 60.00 lakh for North Eastern and Himalayan States and @ 25% with maximum limit of Rs. 50.00 lakhs to other States inclufting rural and backward regions. The Government also launched two Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the development of horticulture viz. 'Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (TMNE) and 'National Horticulture Mission' (NHM) under which assistance is also provided for construction of cold storages adopting the same norms as above. The assistance under TMNE is routed through NHB. As per the report of the Task Force on Development of Cold Chain in India' set up during 2007, as on December 2006, there were 5101 cold storages in the country with a total capacity of 21.7 Million MTs.

(ii) A credit-linked back-ended scheme on Capital Investment Subsidy for Construction/Renovation of Rural Godown has been launched in 2001 with the objectives for creation of scientific storage capacity with allied facilities in rural areas to meet out various requirements of farmers for storing farm produce, processed farm produce, etc. Under this scheme, subsidy @ 25% is given to all categories of farmers, agriculture graduates, cooperatives & Central Warehousing Corporations/ State Warehousing Corporations. All other categories of individuals, companies and corporations are eligible for subsidy @ 15% of the project cost. Subsidy @ 33.33% is given in the case of North Eastern States/hilly areas & SC/ST entrepreneurs and their cooperatives as well as women farmers.

(iii) The Department of Food and Public Distribution also promotes storage facilities through Food Corporation of India (FCI), Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and State Warehousing Corporations (SWC). As on 1.10.2009, the storage capacity available with FCI, CWC and SWCs are 27.78 Million MTs, 10.59 Million MTs and 21.95 Million MTs respectively.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the system in place for storing agro products and whether Government finds any fault in this system; and

(d) the steps Government is going to take, at the earliest, for making sufficient arrangement to store agro products so that these products do not get wasted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An Expert Committee was constituted by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation during 1998 to review the cold storages facilities in the country and assess the requirement of additional capacity etc. with a view to minimize the post harvest losses. The estimated loss of food grains ranges from 8% to 10% and for fruits and vegetables; the loss is estimated between 25% to 30% due to the lack of adequate infrastructure including cold storages.

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Alkalinity and Salinity in the Soil

132. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the levels of alkalinity and salinity of soil/land have increased due to regular and excessive use of chemical fertilizers;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to reduce the levels of alkalinity and salinity of land;

(c) whether the discontinuance of chemical fertilizers and use of traditional cow-dung and other bio-manures would result in fall in foodgrain production; and

(d) if so, the method by which Government proposes to enhance production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The area affected by alkalinity and salinity has increased due to imbalanced and indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and unscientific use of soil and water resources.

(b) A new scheme, namely, National Project on Management of Soil Health and Fertility (NPMSHF) has been introduced during 2008-09 to promote soil test based balanced and judicious use of chemical fertilizer in conjunction with organic manure and bio-fertilizer. Financial assistance is also provided for reclamation and development of both alkali and acid soils under various programmes.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Government is promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) envisaging conjunctive use of both inorganic and organic sources of nutrients to sustain good soil health and higher crop productivity in the country.

Shortfall in production of paddy due to drought

133. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how many districts have been declared drought affected, State-wise and what kind of helps are being extended by the Centre to these States for relief and rehabilitation;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is a shortfall in the paddy sowing in the country due to the scanty rainfall and drought situation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and expected shortfall in the paddy production thereby;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) 12 States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have declared 300 districts as affected by drought/scarcity/drought-like situation. State-wise details are indicated below:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi